

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: May 10, 2012

Agenda Item: Proposed HB454 Hunter Access Agreement

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Proposed Agreement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 15 minutes

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Background: Under the provisions of 87-2-513 MCA, FWP received the authority to issue either-sex or antlerless elk permits to landowners for management purposes. The landowner must offer free public elk hunting, meet the various conditions of the statute, and enter a contractual public elk hunting access agreement with FWP.

The contract defines the areas open to public elk hunting, the number of elk hunting days that will be allowed on the property, and other factors that FWP and the landowner consider necessary for the proper management of elk on the landowner's property.

The Swanz Hunting Access Agreement specifically states that in return for allowing access to elk hunters, Mr. Swanz, or a family member, would receive one 411-21 either-sex permit. In turn, FWP would issue four additional 411-21 permits from the already randomized list of unsuccessful applicants for that license permit type (LPT). Successful applicants could only hunt on the Swanz deeded property. This agreement was first used in 2002 and has been reapplied annually since then based upon continued positive post-hunt evaluations. The proposed agreement for 2012 represents no change from the 2011 agreement.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The Swanz agreement has received public review in previous years via the Commission's hunting season setting process. To date, that review has generated relatively few public comments. Additionally, the post-hunt evaluations have sought feedback from all identified hunters and the landowner. To date, the evaluations generally confirm that agreement terms, and reasonable expectations, are being met to all parties' satisfaction. Public comment will run through 5 PM Monday, June 18 with any final adoption scheduled July 12.

Alternatives and Analysis: Failure to approve this agreement may result in reduced public elk hunting access in this area. Despite staff efforts to increase awareness and potentially apply this management option, no other agreements have been identified to date.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends approval to proceed with the Swanz Hunting Access Agreement. The Swanz agreement terms have been met with positive reviews received on this working access opportunity with no adverse resource impact identified.

Proposed Motion: I move the Commission adopt the proposed Hunting Access Agreements for the 2012 general hunting season as proposed by FWP.